

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers*
and *Petty-Statefmen*, of 'all Sides.

Saturday, May 6. 1704.

OUR last ended with the Character of the profound Submission made by all the Gentry of *France*, to the Command of their absolute Monarch; Gentlemen who have travel'd in *France* too lately for History to come: at the Heels of the Fact, tell us very diverting Stories of the Court of the Marshals in Cases of Personal Affronts, and the extraordinary Justice done by way of Reparation in Point of Honour, which the *French* call *L' Amende Honorable*.

I have often fancy'd there is something more of the Old Custom, which we call *Lex Talionis*, in this way of judging, than in any Proceedings I have read of ——— If I give the Reader the Particulars of some, from the many I have heard, I desire the Favour of the Censorious Part of Mankind to take this with them by the way.

I cannot satisfy my self to say any thing in Print, without either being very sure of my Authorities, or letting the World know upon what Foot, as to Credit, they are to take it. ——— 'Tis my Opinion, if an Historian relates a Falshood without the due Caution of telling his Reader how he had it, he pawns his own Reputation upon the Truth of it, makes himself answerable, and the Fraud becomes his own.

Wherefore, tho' I may on the Credit of the Authors, tell the World I believe firmly the Instances I am going to give are Genuine; yet I shall always tell you when I have a Story from a Report of Gentlemen, or from a positive History.

The Accounts I shall now give, are therefore to be reckon'd with the first; and tho' they may be never the less Fact, the Reader is thus furnish'd with a Caution, and his Observations on my Credulity anticipated.

One of the First Methods which, as I am inform'd, this Court of Honourary Justice proceeded upon, was, That if they had any Notice of Broils and Quarrels among Gentlemen of Quality, the King immediately was acquainted with it, the Persons sent for and oblig'd to declare the Circumstances, and the Aggressor being found out, was oblig'd to give Security for the safe forth-coming of the Person; this Security is forfeited if any Accident befall, whether the Person was the Cause or no, unless he to whom such Mischief happen'd, voluntarily acquitted him of being concern'd in it.

The Ingenious Author of the *Soldier's Guide*, gives a remarkable Instance of this, in the Case of a private Trooper in the Army,

my, who had discover'd a false Muster in the Regiment; the King had published, That if any Soldier could discover a Fraud in the Musters, he should have a Reward of 100 Crowns, have his Discharge from the Service, and a Pass to his own Home.

The Commissary of the Musters having drawn out the Regiment, and the Trooper observing a Faggot, *as the Soldiers call it*, plac'd in the Rear of the Troop he was in, rides out of the Rank to the Commissary, and acquaints him of it; the Commissary knowing the Severity of the King in this Case, purposely made as if he did not hear him, and then once or twice put him off, to give the Officer, who was concern'd, and who was his Friend, time to remove the Fellow out of the Ranks; the Captain, (who knowing his Guilt, the sooner took the Hint,) had been as sharp and dexterous in it as he could wish. When all was over, the Commissary pretends to be very diligent, and comes with the Trooper to the Ranks, but the poor Fellow was in the utmost Confusion when he found the Man gone and plac'd among the Servants as he should be.

The Captain, the Collonel of the Regiment and the Commissary, all agreed to make an Example of him, which they executed very cruelly; they cut off one of his Ears, they ty'd him up to the Post, and caus'd him to be beaten by Two Dragoons most unmercifully; and stripping him of his Cloaths, turn'd him out of the Regiment.

The rest of the Troopers pitying their Comrade, who they knew to be a brave Fellow, and several of them also who knew the thing to be true, made a Purse for him, and advis'd him to go directly to the King; the poor Man all wounded as he was, made the best of his way to Court, and throwing himself at the King's Feet, gave an Account of his Usage.

The King of France, who has made himself particularly belov'd among his People, by readily hearing Petitions, and personally redressing the private Abuses of his Subjects, heard him with a great deal of Patience, and tho' the Story was imperfectly told, the King call'd to those who were by him, and ordered them to cause the Collonel, the Commissary, and the Captain to be sent

for from the Army; also he ordered the Trooper to name such Soldiers of the Troop as were able to prove for him any of the Particulars; who were also sent for, and an immediate Hearing directed.

In short the Fellow made out the Matter as related, his bruised Body, and the Wounds in his Face, shew'd well enough the Truth of the Usage he had receiv'd, and on a full hearing ordered the Collonel to be broke, the Commissary, but for the great Intercession of his Friends, had been hang'd, the Captain was ordered to pay the Man 2000 Livres in Money, to cause him to be carefully cur'd of his Wounds, his Cloaths and Equipage to be restor'd him, to be conduct'd home at his Charge, and to give Security for his safe forth-coming for Two Years, and was declar'd incapable of serving in the Army any more, as long as he liv'd.

Tho' the latter Part of this Story only respects the Article I am upon, yet I could not abate the Reader any Part of it, because as 'tis quoted from an Authentick Author, so it has a great many good Morals which may be drawn from it; were it not an Action of this Great Monster of France, who we have such personal Aversion for, that we scorn to imitate him even where he does well; and, but that I am not willing to be told I am writing for the French Party as well as of the French Affairs, I could say a great deal more to it.

I am told another Story of Two Gentlemen of *Bretaign*, who had liv'd in continual Quarrels about a Mistress, which it seems both of them enjoy'd; but Madam *La Coquette* had dispens'd her Favours with such Circumspection, that each thought, as is usual in such Cases, himself entire Master of her, and the other only his Rival; but at last *the Murder came out*, they quarrell'd almost at the Corner of every Street, and being known to be both Men of the Sword, their Friends took a great deal of Pains to keep them from fighting, often made them shake hands, and promise to say no more of it; but still the Quarrel broke out afresh, and particularly once meeting in a publick Place of the Town, they fell to high Words, and grew so hot, that the Friends

on both sides took away their Swords, but one of them losing all Patience, call'd the other all the Abusive Names he could think of; and snatching a Cane from a Gentleman that stood by, Caned him with it till the People parted them.

As the Quarrel was now grown too high for the Mediation of Friends, they thought they could do no thing kinder to them both, than bring it before the Magistrates; so they were both secured, but all Men allow'd that Person to be the Aggressor; so the other was let go, upon giving Security to make his Complaint to the Court of the Marshals.

The matter came to a speedy Hearing, and as Caning is the last Affront to be supposed a Gentleman can give or take, the Court were very Exemplary in the Punishment, for they Order'd the Offender to have the like Number of blows given him, with a Cane, in the Middle of the Town, by a Woman of the Meanest and most Infamous Character that could be found and enquiring out the Mistress they Quarrel'd for, they Order'd her to be Banish'd the Province, and awarded the Complainant to be paid his Charges, and Security be given, that he should offer him no Affront for the Future.

Tho' the Justice of this Sentence is very Particular, yet that which is more Remarkable in it is, that this Gentleman not only submitted to the Sentence for that perhaps he could not help, but liv'd afterwards in very good Correspondence with his Antagonist; and they were never known to differ afterward.

I don't design this for a Satyr upon the

Temper of our own Country, yet I Question whether there is an *English* Man shall read this Paper, that will venture to say for himself, he could do the same —

This I take to be the Effect of the entire Absolute Submission, that is paid to the King's Command, and that Obedience without reserve; which, *as God be thank'd, they are all more oblig'd to than we are, so they are better Qualified for it by their own servile Temper.*

'Tis strange that the *French* should give a more entire Submission to the Absolute Commands of a single Man, than we do here to the Laws of our own making.

I don't say the *French* are to blame in Obeying their Laws, such as they are; but the *English* must be unaccountably blameable, whose Laws are the People's own Act and Deed, made at their Request, agreed to by their own Voluntary Will, for every single Freeholder Consents to every Individual Clause by their Representatives, yet no Nation in the World make such a jest of their Laws as the *English*.

If it were the Business of this Paper to Treat of Home Affairs, it would not be Improper to enumerate here, the Multitude of Statutes which are superseded by Custom, and now lie Dormant in *England*, as things grown Obsolete and unregarded, till the People begin to forget there are any such Laws in Being; such are the Laws against Relieving Beggars, the Weights, Measures, and Quality of Provisions, and the like; but this Subject being too Foreign to the present Design, I avoid going out of the Way, to a thing that requires so much to be said of it.

ADVICE from the Scandalous CLUB.

THE Gentlemen of Censure and Remark may see how willing I am to follow the Rule I prescribe them, and Correct any thing they find fault with, whether there has been occasion for it or no.

Upon this Score and also wanting Room in this Paper, I have Order'd to leave out our Title of *Mercur Scandale*.

Not but that I knew what Language it

was, before the Author of the *Courant* made his witty Reflection upon it; and am very free to tell him, I knew as well as he the Objections against the Grammar of it — But as it was us'd here as a *Mot de Guerre* a made Name to a thing, It is as easy to be Defended as a *Jack Heskin*, or *Smeagmamus*, or any other compound Words; which all Authors have taken the Freedom to make use of in like Cases.

So Ignorant as well as eager, are these Gentlemen in Revenging the affront done to their own extraordinary Capacities.

Further I am to tell my *animalverting* Author, that notwithstanding his Ignorance, I have a very good Precedent to justify this, from a Book of the very same Title, which for some time was Publish'd in Paris, about the Year 1681. Till making a little too free with their Superiors, it was Ordred to be suppress'd.

And so much for my Title.

I shall Entertain you, Gentlemen, after this Day, with no more Stories for Re-proof or Diversion for some time, till I have gone thro' the Necessary Defence of our Society: but having a little Room here, it being too late to begin a Head in this Paper, I must acquaint the World that the following Letter was sent us last Week, and the Society having found the Observations were very Just, have given the Publick a View of them as they are;

Gentlemen;

Pray at the next meeting of the Society be pleas'd to examine the Gazette N^o. 4072. from Thursday, April 20. to Monday, April 24. and tell us,

1st. *How came the Advice there from Antwerp to the Hague, since all Correspondence by Letters or otherwise is strictly Interdicted on both sides?*

2. *What's means by this News from Turin?*

"About 4000 French Recruits came
"last Week, by Sea from Thoulon to San
"Pietro D' Arens near Genoa, which
"make up the Number of 10000 that
"are already Arriv'd there.

Pray, Gentlemen, how many do they make in all?

Upon Reading this Letter, the Society Order'd the Gentleman to be acquainted, that truly they could not find out the Mystery and advis'd him to consult with the Author of the Gazette about it who 'Tis thought may be best able to Interpret it.

A Dvertisements are taken in by J. Matthews, in Pulkington-Court in Little Britain.

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